Rise-fall-rise: A prosodic window on secondary QUDs

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There are several long-standing views of rise-fall-rise intonation (RFR), in English and related languages. One is that RFR is a marker of **secondary information** (e.g., Gussenhoven 1984; Potts 2005) – see examples (1) to (3). Another is that RFR marks the **(contrastive) topic** of the utterance, e.g., in (4) Fred would be the topic and the beans the focus, and the other way around in (5) (examples from Jackendoff 1972; for formal accounts see Roberts 1996; Büring 2003). A third view on RFR is that it marks uncertain relevance as in (6) (Ward and Hirschberg 1985) or, closely related, **partial answerhood** (e.g., Wagner et al. 2013). Can these views be reconciled? Is there a common denominator that ties the many different uses of RFR together?
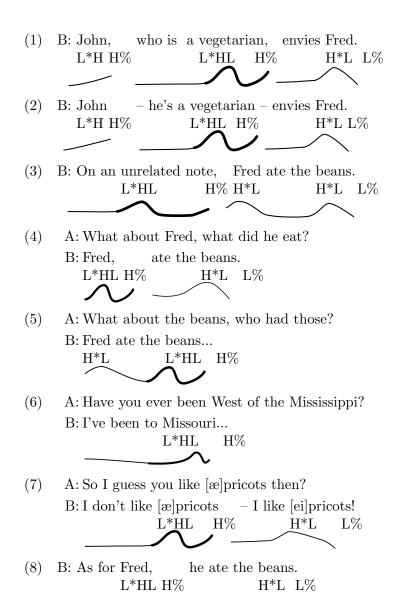
In suggesting a positive answer to these questions, I am building on my theory of **Intonational Compliance Marking** (ICM; Westera 2013, 2017, ms in press). The ICM theory says that boundary tones indicate whether the speaker intends to comply (L%) with the conversation maxims relative to the main Question Under Discussion (QUD) or not (H%). Trailing tones (L, H) of accents indicate the same, but relative to a focus-congruent QUD (which may but not need be the same as the main QUD). RFR intonation (L*HL H%) has a low trailing tone followed by a high boundary tone, which entails the presence of two distinct QUDs: H% indicates potential non-compliance relative to the main QUD; L indicates compliance relative to a focus-congruent QUD – and since a single utterance cannot both comply and not comply relative to the same QUD, the two QUDs must be distinct. RFR, therefore, is predicted to be a **marker of secondary QUDs**.

To understand a certain usage of RFR, therefore, the foregoing predicts that we should try to understand what the secondary QUD is, i.e., which question is being completely resolved why some other, main QUD is left open. In the poster presentation I want to walk through a number of examples, including the ones on the next page, that are representative of the aforementioned main strands in the literature on RFR. I hope to show that each of these examples snaps into place once an analysis in terms of a secondary QUD is considered.

(1)   B: John,   who is a vegetarian,   envies Fred.
        L*H H%   L*HL   H%   H*L L%

(2)   B: John   – he's a vegetarian – envies Fred.
        L*H H%   L*HL H%   H*L L%

(3)   B: On an unrelated note,   Fred ate the beans.
          L*HL   H% H*L   H*L   L%

(4)   A: What about Fred, what did he eat?
        B: Fred,   ate the beans.
          L*HL H%   H*L   L%

(5)   A: What about the beans, who had those?
        B: Fred ate the beans...
          H*L   L*HL   H%

(6)   A: Have you ever been West of the Mississippi?
        B: I've been to Missouri...
              L*HL   H%

(7)   A: So I guess you like [æ]pricots then?
        B: I don't like [æ]pricots   – I like [ei]pricots!
              L*HL   H%   H*L   L%

(8)   B: As for Fred,   he ate the beans.
          L*HL H%   H*L L%

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